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ABSTRACT

This brief student workbook is designed to help students think about their needs, their motivations, how they like to work, what their interests are, and what kind of relationships they want to have with others. It is intended to start students thinking about what they would like to know about themselves, careers in the arts, and artists. The first of three sections in the workbook gives the students an opportunity to state why they want to work in the arts. The second section presents the following five ways to get involved with the arts: (1) making art objects, (2) performing for others, (3) collaborating with others, (4) sharing the arts with others, and (5) participating in arts related careers. The final section encourages students to write about the experiences they have received in the arts. (LRA)

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CAREERS IN THE ARTS

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A Training Program for Careers in the Arts
Sponsored by the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts

some basic assumptions

1. There are many ways to have a career in the arts.

2. While talent is often thought to be the key ingredient in a successful arts career, the most important factor is the desire to do it.

3. If you have some talent in one art form, it is quite likely that you may also have talents in other art forms as well.

4. Building a career in the arts can be as creative as the arts process itself.

5. Different careers in the arts vary in need for training, security, financial reward, type of work, and relationships with other people.

6. There are many careers outside of the arts that use the same talents an artist would use.

how to use this book

This workbook offers some information but is intended to make you think about yourself-

to encourage you to think about your needs, your motivations, how you like to work, what your interests are, and what kind of relationships you want to have with others.

There are some spaces for you to record what you know and feel at this time. As you move closer to your decision, these notes may be valuable.

Most of all, we hope this workbook starts you thinking about what you'd like to know about yourself, careers in the arts, and artists.

Q: How do I know I want to work in the arts?

What interests you? What do you really enjoy spending time doing? How to you like to work?

5 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE ARTS :

I making art objects

1. The making of an art object includes all the "objects" produced in art forms. For example, musical compositions, play scripts, short stories, novels, poems, fashion designs, costume designs, stage and set designs, paintings, drawings, and sculpture are all objects produced by an art process.

2. Making the object, using what is called the art process, or the creative process, is often something one does alone. The artist, himself, makes all the decisions starting from his ideas of what to do through to its conclusion.

3. Because making an art object and being involved with the creative process is such a rewarding experience, a second dimension of the work is sometimes overlooked. In order to make a living making objects, some method must be devised for selling or distributing that object.

4. In selling or distributing art objects, one encounters all the problems of marketing. There are artists who manage this dimension of their work themselves; in other cases, there are agents, dealers, publishers to become involved with.

5. Quality is an important factor in successfully selling any art object. However, other factors are also significant. For example, the artist's ability to produce a body of work demonstrates more fully than a single object his concern for ideas and the medium; the body of work reveals the artist's process and how the work has developed.

6. Of interest to others, including those who will sell and buy art objects, are also such factors as credentials and credits. Competitions, awards, shows, exhibits, performances, publications, and reviews are an important part of many artists' work.

7. There is sometimes a conflict for the artist who makes objects in that the kind of person who can work alone, and likes to work alone, is not often the same person who can deal with a market of dealers, agents, and publishers or who is interested in selling. A successful artist must contend with both dimensions of the work: making it, and then selling it. One cannot live off the work until this problem is solved.

2 performing for others

1. A performer is one who loves an audience.

2. Performers are conscious of "their total instrument". In other words, a performer seeks to train herself through as many avenues as possible including the study of acting, movement, dance, and music. If a performer plays an instrument, that instrument is merely an extension of herself.

3. Essential to good performance is discipline. A performer must be willing to practice and rehearse, and to prepare himself properly for the work.

4. Training is not only a part of a performer's preparation, but likely to be a part of the total career. Throughout one's active career, continuous development and refinement of the "instrument" is sought with the help of good teachers.

5. Performers who understand and can perform other skills within the field are more likely to gain opportunities to work. Not only does it make the performer more valuable to the company, it gives him a better understanding of the relationships among all the people involved in the production.

6. Finding work as a performer is something that can be done by herself, or with agents. All performers must know how to audition, have developed a repertoire, be able to present a portfolio of their credits, and make themselves available for auditions.

7. Of critical importance is the performer's motivation to keep trying, even after rejections and hardships.

8. Part-time work, additional job skills, unemployment and unpaid work are usually part of survival between performance opportunities.

9. As performance is more often ensemble rather than solo, the ability to work with others, to relate to others' energy, and to understand one is a part of the whole is critical.

10. Ultimately, performance is about communication, and there is a special quality among performers who are professional in their attitude, and have a "presence" that allows an audience to enjoy its "willing suspension of disbelief."

3 collaborating with others

1. Collaboration with others, is first of all, working together with others to solve problems or create projects.

2. Central to most collaborative jobs is problem-solving. The kinds of opportunities might include: technical theatre, work in media such as film or television, environmental design, team-teaching, projects that call for different kinds of art and artists to work together to produce new works in dance or performance, ensemble theatre or dance companies, advertising - especially for media.

3. Usually all parties involved in such collaborations must be aware of the art process or the creative process. They must understand how ideas are developed, how to make choices in the refinement of ideas, and how to arrive at a finished work.

4. Artists who work collaboratively are excited about the wealth of new ideas and energy that come from working with other creative people. There is often a greater sense of accomplishing something bigger than one might get from working alone. Sometimes by working together, artists can pool resources and gain more support for their work.

5. Well developed skill in one's craft is essential to such a collaboration as the end result will only reflect the quality of each contribution to the whole.

6. In addition, some appreciation and understanding of other kinds of problems and information is helpful. For example, designers for theatre must know carpentry, painting, electricity; environmental designers must understand architecture and the sciences; artists, to collaborate with one another, must be willing to learn about each other's art form.

7. Collaborators must be willing to accept and work with different kinds of decision making. Some projects will be "directed" having contributions from many people reviewed by one; other arrangements might be more democratic and give equal decision making power to all participants. The ground rules in each situation need to be understood, and the individual must come to know in which kind of a situation he works best.

4 sharing the arts with others

1. Sharing the art experience with others is usually done by people who have themselves enjoyed the arts.

2. This is people-work. That is, the arts are shared with all kinds of people, and in a variety of situations. For instance, the arts can be brought to the elderly in homes for the aged; to men and women, and even adolescents, in prisons and half-way houses; to a community through neighborhood centers and parks; to students in school; and to patients in hospitals.

3. These kinds of opportunities rely heavily upon one's sensitivity to others, and one's ability to understand how someone else can relate to the arts. You have to be able to "see" through someone else's eyes.

4. Verbal skills are also important. Being able to express oneself well, and to talk about the arts to others is essential. Usually, the situation will call for relationships with a variety of people - from those who run programs to those who receive the services.

5. Working with people can be a very rewarding experience, especially if one understands what the arts can do to make life better.

6. There are opportunities in this field not only for the person who "shares" the arts with others, but also for those who are good at planning and administrating programs, events, festivals, and performances. It is a good place for problem-solvers and people with ideas of how to get something done.

7. Interest in more than one art form, or special skills such as foreign languages are often keys to opportunities in this field.

8. Related skills in accounting, budgeting, management, education, therapy, and public relations are useful in obtaining special positions.

5 arts related careers

1. The skills artists use are common to many kinds of activities. For instance, an artist might use voice control, manual dexterity, organizational skills, design skills, or body control.

2. These skills are often required in other fields of employment. The well developed skill of speaking and dramatically expressing oneself is as important to the lawyer and the minister as it is to the artist.

3. Problem-solving exists in almost every type of work. The creative process or the art process is a fundamental part of problem-solving. One who has developed an understanding of the creative process can apply it to all kinds of situations from daily life to professional work.

4. In addition to the possibility of applying arts skills and creative problem-solving to every kind of work, people with artistic abilities seek to keep the arts somehow present in their daily lives. They might continue to be an "audience" for the arts, going to performances and exhibits; they might become active in supporting the arts by serving on boards and with agencies interested in the arts; they might continue to work in their art form and to enjoy the dimension it brings to their personal lives.

5. People can have many careers and creative people do well at making changes and taking risks to gain more from life.

6. Everything one does has an impact upon one's person; as the creative person experiences life, his ideas and imagery and interest in media will change. Often, artists emerge out of other professions when they feel ready to communicate and/or express their experiences. For example, playwrights can start writing late in life and make a tremendous contribution to the arts; others survive for a while off other related work and turn to the arts even as late as retirement.

back to you, again

In this space, write about the experiences you have had so far with the arts. Which of the five general ways of getting involved in the arts have you experienced? What did you like, and what did you not like? Also try to list the things you would like to try and the questions you would like to ask.

for more information:

talk to artists

explore your talents

see some art

read